

# **IOWA BIRD LIFE**

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## **IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION**



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*The Iowa Ornithologists' Union, founded in 1923, encourages interest in the identification, study, and protection of birds in Iowa and seeks to unite those who have these interests in common. Iowa Bird Life and IOU News are quarterly publications of the Union.*

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# First nesting record for Spotted Towhee in Iowa

Joe Jungers

On 6 June 2015 I visited Oak Grove County Park, which is located along the western edge of Sioux County. I was working eastward on the north side of the impoundment near the campground when I heard the call of a Spotted Towhee. I quickly found the bird and identified it as a Spotted Towhee by its boldly spotted black mantle and wings (Figure 1). The bird was singing persistently in the same area and was obviously territorial. I did not see any females. As I continued west towards the Big Sioux River I encountered another singing male Spotted Towhee. This individual was also singing persistently and keeping to one area, and I looked for but didn't find a female.



Figure 1. Spotted Towhee tending a Brown-headed Cowbird fledgling at Oak Grove P, Sioux, 20 June 2015. Photograph by Joe Jungers, Hospers, IA.

Cowbird fledgling. I watched the male feed the cowbird but did not see the female. I also refound the second male Spotted Towhee in its same location.

This is the first breeding record for Spotted Towhee in Iowa. During my observations I saw no evidence that any of the towhees was a hybrid with Eastern Towhee. The Spotted Towhee is well distributed as a breeding bird in the western U.S. Its known breeding range extends eastward to northeastern Nebraska (Sharpe, R. S., W. R. Silcock, and J. G. Jorgensen. 2001. *Birds of Nebraska: Their distribution and temporal occurrence*. The University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln.), just a short distance from Oak Grove Park. There is one previous Iowa summer record on 28 June 2000 in Lyon Co. (*Iowa Bird Life* 70:179); a hybrid Spotted X Eastern Towhee was seen 11 June 2002 in Pottawattamie Co. (*Iowa Bird Life* 72:218).

I returned to the park on 20 June and relocated the first male. It was in approximately the same location. I also found a female Spotted Towhee foraging on the ground amongst some thick brush just under the male. As I was watching the female I heard a noisy bird nearby, which turned out to be a begging Brown-headed Cowbird fledgling. Almost immediately the male flew in and fed the young Brown-headed Cowbird. I also relocated the second male Spotted Towhee in the same area as before. On 28 June I made a final visit to Oak Grove Park and relocated the first male Spotted Towhee with a begging Brown-headed

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# Field Reports—Summer 2015

*James J. Dinsmore*



*James J. Dinsmore*

With no major flooding or drought, it was a relatively normal summer. Temperatures were close to long-term averages in both months with few extremes. Rainfall in both months was somewhat above average but again without major extremes. Only two Casual species were found, and evidence of nesting was obtained for one species that was not known to nest in Iowa previously.

## WEATHER

June temperatures averaged 69.6 degrees, 0.1 degree below the long-term average and the 72nd coolest (or 72nd warmest) June in 143 years of records. Very cool weather prevailed at the beginning of June with Elkader reporting a low of 36 degrees on the first. It soon turned warmer with the monthly high of 99 degrees in Sioux City on 9 June and 97 degrees in southwestern Iowa on 10 June. Much of the rest of the month was cool with lows of 50 degrees at Mapleton on 16 June and

Sheldon and Spencer on 19 June.

Rainfall in June totaled 6.46 inches, 1.44 inches above normal and the 22nd wettest June on record. The first week of June was relatively dry but rainfall was fairly heavy thereafter. From 10–12 June, rainfall was fairly heavy in southwestern Iowa and around Cedar Rapids with totals of 4 to 6 inches fairly common. The month's heaviest rains were on 24 June in a band from Greene County to Monroe County with one station in Marion County receiving 7.3 inches. The Raccoon River watershed received much rain with the river's crest in Des Moines on 26 June the third highest on record. Only the memorable floods of 1993 and 2008 had higher crests. Overall, total June rainfall was lowest in northwestern Iowa where several counties received only half of their normal total. High totals were scattered throughout the state with Bellevue, Bloomfield, Donnellson, Guthrie Center, and Vinton all having their second wettest June on record. Monthly extremes were 2.07 inches in Everly and 13.54 inches in Waukee. As often happens, episodes of severe weather occurred somewhere in the state on 11 days in June. The most severe was on 22 June when a derecho brought damaging winds to much of the northern third of Iowa and later in the day led to an EF-3 tornado in Monroe County.

July temperatures averaged 72.2 degrees, 1.4 degrees below normal and the 27th coolest July on record. Cool temperatures prevailed during the first 10 days with no stations exceeding 90 degrees. Temperatures during the middle third of the month were above average, and the last third was divided between temperatures above and below average. The high temperature was 97 degrees at Des Moines on 13 July, at Bellevue, Lamoni, and Osceola on 17 July, and Hawarden on 24 July. The lowest temperature was 44 degrees at Cresco and Elkader on 2 July and at Spencer on 3 July.

Rainfall in July averaged 5.71 inches, 1.21 inches above normal and the 19th wettest July in 143 years of records. With a statewide average of 1.64 inches, the first half of July was dry compared to the 4.07 inches of rainfall in the second half. Strong rainfall events with 3 to 5 inches of rain occurred in Muscatine and Scott counties on 6 July and similar amounts in Page and Taylor counties on 15 July. Late July rains included 4 plus inches in Mason City on 24 July and 6 inches in Warren County on 28 July. In general, northern Iowa had below-average rainfall and the southern third of the state was very wet. Monthly rainfall extremes were 1.2 inches in Dubuque and 13.33 inches in Knoxville.

## BIRDS OF SUMMER

### Habitat Conditions

Most of Iowa is private land, much of that row-crop agriculture, and thus many of our bird species depend upon scattered patches of native vegetation on private land and our limited public lands for nesting habitat. For more than 30 years, the Conservation Reserve Program has been an important example of public money being used to provide nesting habitat on private land. This program has been especially important for grassland birds but in recent years, the acreage enrolled in the program has decreased steadily with Iowa losing some half a million acres of CRP in the last eight years. There have been a few recent signups for the program, but it looks like the program will continue to erode in the future.

Starting in 2001, the Iowa DNR has been actively identifying Bird Conservation Areas, complexes of public and private land with at least 25% of the land providing good habitat for birds. Earlier this year they formally named the 20th such area, the Waterman Prairie BCA in northwestern Iowa. Centered on the Waterman Creek Wildlife Management Area and including adjacent public areas and parts of the Little Sioux River watershed in O'Brien, Buena Vista, Clay, and Cherokee counties, this 68,000 acre BCA provides a mixture of grasslands with some surprisingly rich woodlands in the valleys. This BCA provides important nesting habitat for Upland Sandpipers, Red-headed Woodpeckers, Eastern Bluebirds, Bobolinks, and other species.

### Breeding Species

Probably the most interesting find among nesting species this summer was the report of a Spotted Towhee feeding a young Brown-headed Cowbird, the first record of Spotted Towhee nesting activity in Iowa. This is the fourth consecutive year in which a new breeding species has been found in Iowa. Even more amazingly, new breeding species have been found in seven of the past 10 years. Another significant find was the second record of nesting by Black-necked Stilt.

Both Osprey and Peregrine Falcon had good years and showed modest growth in the number of nesting sites. This year Bald Eagles completed their colonization of Iowa with nests now reported from all 99 Iowa counties. Northern Bobwhite also seemed to have had a good year with counts on two BBS routes up considerably from the lows of a few years ago. Barn Owls seemed to have had a banner year with more nests than usual reported this year. Sandhill Crane numbers continued to increase, and nesting was finally documented in northwestern Iowa where there is extensive wetland habitat and great potential for future growth population growth.

Great Egret, Double-crested Cormorant, and American White Pelican nesting colonies continued to do well at the Clinton spoil islands as did Double-crested Cormorants in Emmet County. This summer, Trumbull Lake was especially productive for marsh birds with many nesting Pied-billed Grebes and American Coots as well as nesting Redheads, Ruddy Ducks, Red-necked Grebes, and Black Terns. Black Terns nested at two other sites, the most nesting activity for that species in Iowa in several years. Other notable species found nesting this summer were Northern Shoveler, Western Grebe, and Wilson's Phalarope.

The intensive sampling by the MSIM program produced numerous reports of Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Least Flycatcher, and Blue-winged Warbler in northeastern Iowa, the area of the state that is the core of those species' Iowa range. In particular, the reports of Least Flycatcher suggest that fairly good populations of that species nest in that corner of Iowa. Counts of Henslow's Sparrows suggested that there are sizeable nesting populations in several southern Iowa locales.

Not all was good news. There was no evidence of nesting by Piping Plovers and Least Terns at the two sites where they have nested for several decades. However, Least Terns were found nesting at another site on the Missouri River. A modest number of Loggerhead Shrikes were found but still far fewer than were found a few decades ago. As in spring (Harms 2015), no one reported any Black-billed Magpies. Is Iowa's lone population melting away?

### Range Changes

Several species showed evidence of continuing range change. Blue Grosbeaks were reported from several locations scattered across central Iowa, evidence of expansion from their former range in western and southeastern Iowa. It also appeared that Summer Tanagers were continuing to move north with several reports across the central third of Iowa. There were few reports of Western Kingbirds and none of Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, two species that have shown evidence of range expansion in the past. With one reported in Tama County, the Eurasian Tree Sparrow continued its march north and west across Iowa.

### Migrants

Spring migration was pretty much over by the beginning of June. The few late northbound shorebirds included Semipalmated Plover, Dunlin, Ruddy Turnstone, Pectoral Sandpiper, and Semipalmated Sandpiper as well as the usual late Black Terns. The only late flycatchers reported were Olive-sided Flycatcher and several Alder Flycatchers. Lingering songbirds were Tennessee, Connecticut, and Blackpoll warblers and a record-late Lincoln's Sparrow.

Southbound migrants started arriving in late June with the usual early Greater and



Lesser yellowlegs. Most interesting were two flocks totaling 54 Willets on 28 June and reports of Whimbrels on 11 and 23 June. Other shorebirds arrived on time in July. Other southbound migrants arriving in July included Double-crested Cormorant, American White Pelican, Franklin's Gull, and Black Tern. The only early arriving passerine reported was a very early Olive-sided Flycatcher.

### Unusual Species

This was a fairly poor summer for unusual birds. No Accidental species were reported this summer and only two Casual species, Black-bellied Whistling-Duck and Painted Bunting, were found. Other unusual species found this summer were Red-necked Grebe, Western Grebe, Snowy Egret, Swainson's Hawk, Black-necked Stilt, Whimbrel, Western Sandpiper, Connecticut Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Pine Warbler, Spotted Towhee, and Lincoln's Sparrow.

#### SPECIES DATA

All CAPS = Accidental or Casual species, \* = documented. County names are in italics. Full names of contributors are at the end of the article. Abbreviations used: **ad** = adult, **A** = area, **BCA** = bird conservation area, **Croton** = Croton unit, Shimek State Forest (ditto Donnellson, Farmington, and Lick Creek units), **F** = forest, **juv** = juvenile, **L** = lake, **M** = marsh, **m.ob.** = many observers, **NM** = national monument, **NWR** = national wildlife refuge, **P** = park, **ph** = photo, **R** = river, **RA** = recreation area, **Res** = reservoir, **se half** = diagonal se half, **Sl** = slough, **SP** = state park, **UpperMissRefuge** = Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge, **WPA** = waterfowl production area, **WA** = wildlife area, **yg** = young.

Key to maps: shading = species reported in county. In most cases, the species was probably nesting in the county although evidence was presented only in a few cases.

**BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK:** All: 2 from 15–21 Jun at Wapsi River Environmental Education Center *Scott* (BCC, JLF, RIA, PHA, \*MHB), and 2 on 8 Jul at Sweet M *Bremer* (Logan McEwan *fide* SJD, ph).

**Greater White-fronted Goose:** All

singles: 14, 19 Jun at Cone M *Louisa* (JF), 16, 18 Jun, 11, 23 Jul, at Crystal Hills WA *Hancock* (BVL, CJF, RGo, PH), and 1 Jul at Babcock Access *Johnson* (JF).

**Snow Goose:** All: 25 on 1 Jun at Binder L *Adams* (AMJ), 2 on 1 Jun at Green Valley SP *Union* (LAS), one 4 Jun at Rock Creek WA *Jasper* (MSIM), and one 13 Jun at Otter Creek M *Tama* (JF).

**Trumpeter Swan:** This species now seems fairly well established in northern Iowa. To try to augment the swan population in southern Iowa, earlier this year the Iowa DNR released 4 Trumpeter Swans each at L *Icaria Adams*, Summit L *Union*, and Coffey M *Wayne*, and 2 swans each at L *Anita Cass*, East L *Osceola Clarke*, and Viking L *Montgomery*.

**Gadwall:** All: one 6 Jun at Badger L *Woodbury* (GVL), 3 on 7 Jun and 5 on 29 Jun at Trumbull L *Clay* (LAS), 3 on 13 Jun at Otter Creek M *Tama* (JF), 4 on 16 Jun at Union Slough NWR *Kossuth* (MCK), 2 on 18 Jun at Crystal Hills WA *Hancock* (BVL, CJF), and one 22 Jul at the UpperMissRefuge *Jackson* (LGR).

**American Wigeon:** All: one 14 Jun at Cone M *Louisa* (JF).

**Northern Shoveler:** Broods of 4 and 5 yg 11 Jun at Marsh Farm Wetland *Dal-*

las (DTh) were among the southernmost nesting records for Iowa. Other reports: 4 on 7 Jun, 5 on 13 Jun, and 3 on 29 Jun at Trumbull L *Clay* (LAS), a male 10 Jun at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO), a male 12 Jun at Cardinal M *Winneshieck* (DC), and one 23 Jul at Union Hills WPA *Cerro Gordo* (BVL).

**Green-winged Teal:** All: one male 15 Jun at Frazer's Bend *Fremont* (SJD), one female 26 Jun and 2 males 29 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF), 2 on 26 Jun at Virgin L *Palo Alto* (MSIM), and one 22, 26 Jul at Saylorsville Res *Polk* (SJD).

**Canvasback:** All: one male 16 Jun at Union Slough NWR *Kossuth* (MCK), 2 on 2 Jul at Union Slough NWR *Kossuth* (SJD), and one 12 Jul on Pool 19 *Lee* (SJD).

**Redhead:** All: 10 on 7 Jun, a female and 12 yg 4 Jul, and 38 ads 26 Jul, all at Trumbull L *Clay* (LAS).

**Ring-necked Duck:** All: 4 on 4 Jun at Otter Creek M *Tama* (JF) and one there 2 Jul (MP), 3 drakes 16 Jun at Union Slough NWR *Kossuth* (MCK), one male 11 Jul at Forest City *Hancock* (PH), and one 13, 24 Jul at Cedar L *Linn* (JF).

**Lesser Scaup:** All: 3 on 4 Jun at Otter Creek M *Tama* (JF), one 7 Jun and 5 on 13 Jun at Trumbull L *Clay* (LAS), and one or 2 there intermittently through 26 Jul (LAS).

**Bufflehead:** A female 15–27 Jul at Union Hills WPA *Cerro Gordo* (BVL, CJF, RGo, PH) was around much of the summer.

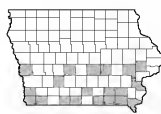
**Hooded Merganser:** A female with 36 yg 27 Jun at Hottes L *Dickinson* (LAS) was quite a sight. Elsewhere in June through mid-July broods were found at Otter Creek M *Tama* (MP), Chichaqua Greenbelt *Polk* (DK, DTh), Yellow River F *Allamakee* (PDBS), Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO), Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (MHB), Frazer's Bend *Fremont* (SJD), near Exira *Audubon* (SJD), near Bartlett *Fremont*, (SJD), at Mallard M *Cerro Gordo* (CJF), Eagle L *Hancock* (CJF), Effigy

Mounds NM *Allamakee* (BSc), Saylorsville Res *Polk* (SJD), Big M *Butler* (DGE), Colo Ponds *Story* (HZ), and Union Slough NWR *Kossuth* (SJD).

**Common Merganser:** All: a male 20 Jun–31 Jul at Cedar L *Linn* (JF, BSc) and a female 21 Jun at New L *Woodbury* (GLV). This is the third consecutive summer and the eighth summer in the last 15 that this species has been found in Iowa.

**Ruddy Duck:** Trumbull L *Clay* was the hotspot with 43 on 13 Jun, 105 on 12 Jul, four broods 26 Jul (LAS) and 123 including a brood 17 Jul (SJD). Besides 23 on 16 Jun at Union Slough NWR *Kossuth* (MCK), up to 9 were found in *Cerro Gordo*, *Hancock*, *Johnson*, *Polk*, and *Woodbury* (MSIM, BVL, PH, JF, DK, GLV).

**Northern Bobwhite:** Reports came from 20 counties across the southern half of Iowa, its traditional range (m.ob., MSIM). Bobwhite seemed to be more abundant than usual with 35 found 16 Jun at Kellerton BCA *Ringgold* (MSIM) and high counts on two BBS routes; 32 in *Appanoose* and *Davis* (most in 10 years, TNJ) and 48 in *Page* and *Fremont* (KVS).



**Gray Partridge:** With fewer reports than usual, birds were found in *Boone*, *Cerro Gordo*, *Hardin*, *Linn*, and *Polk*, (m.ob.), generally south of its usual north-central/northwestern Iowa stronghold. One 8 Jun in southeastern *Poweshiek* (BR) was south-east of its usual range.

**Greater Prairie-Chicken:** All: one 3 Jun and 5 on 2 Jul at Kellerton BCA *Ringgold* (MSIM). This spring, 60 prairie-chickens captured in Nebraska were released at leks in southern Iowa (Iowa DNR).

**Common Loon:** All: one in basic plumage 3, 20 Jun at Pleasant Creek RA *Linn* (JF), 2 in basic on 11, 13 Jun on Clear



L *Cerro Gordo* (CJF), one in alternate plumage 20 Jun–31 Jul at Pleasant Creek RA Linn (JF, BSc), one 20 Jun at Dows *Franklin* (Jessica Bell *vide* SJD), 3 on 30 Jun and one 17 Jul at Spirit L *Dickinson* (GLV, SJD), and one 26 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD, JB).

**Pied-billed Grebe:** Several wetlands had large numbers with 130 including 62 broods 17 Jul at Trumbull L *Clay* (SJD) and many yg there 22 Jul (MP), 58 including many broods 13 Jun at Dan Greene Sl *Clay* (LAS), many ads and yg 22 Jul at Eagle L *Hancock* (MP), and 51 birds 23 Jul at Kiowa M *Sac* (MSIM). An ad with a brood 15 Jul at Cardinal M *Winneshiek* (DC) was a bit out of its usual range.

**Red-necked Grebe:** All: a pair with 3 yg 6, 12, 19 Jul at Trumbull L *Clay* (LAS), 2 ads and 2 yg seen there 17 Jul (SJD), and one ad and one yg there 22 Jul (MP).

**Western Grebe:** Present at Trumbull L *Clay* from 7 Jun–26 Jul with a high count of 8 ads and one yg on 26 Jul (LAS, SJD). Others were singles 26 Jun at Sky L *Black Hawk* (DGE) and 4 Jul at L Rathbun *Appanoose* (TNJ).

**Double-crested Cormorant:** Two nesting colonies did well this summer with 1645 ads, 1036 nests, and 920 yg on 26 Jun at the *Clinton* spoil islands (SJD) and 71 nests and ca 470 birds on 27 Jun at High L *Emmet* (LAS). Southbound birds were apparent by late July with 28 on 24 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (MHB), 22 on 27 Jul at Otter Creek M *Tama* (DGE), and 29 on 29 Jul at Rice L *Worth* (PH). Probable summering birds were in *Allamakee*, *Buena Vista*, *Emmet*, *Johnson*, *Kossuth*, *Louisa*, and *Van Buren* (m.ob., MSIM).

**American White Pelican:** The *Clinton* spoil island colony had 1000 ads, 442 nests, and 705 yg on 26 Jun (SJD). Summering flocks included 25 on 26 Jun at Cedar L *Linn* (RSI) and 23 on 27 Jun at Hawk-



*Great Blue Heron*, Trumbull L, Clay, 25 July 2015. Photograph by Joe Jungers, Hospers, IA.

eye WA *Johnson* (MHB). Flocks of 50 on 10 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (BE), 116 on 11 Jul at Crystal Hills WA *Hancock* (PH), 1150 on 16 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD) and 30 on 22 Jul at Copeland Bend WA *Fremont* (MSIM) indicated the arrival of southbound birds.

**American Bittern:** All: singles 9 Jun at Christian Taylor *Worth* (RGo), 29 Jun at Lakin Sl *Guthrie* (MSIM), 30 Jun at Bjorkboda M *Hamilton* (DCH), and 8 Jul at Harrier M *Boone* (MSIM), and 2 each 10 Jun at Forney L *Fremont* (MSIM) and 17 Jun at Union Hills WA *Cerro Gordo* (MSIM).

**Least Bittern:** More reports than usual: 2 on 7 Jun at Dan Greene Sl *Clay* (LAS), 7 on 13 Jun at Trumbull L *Clay* (LAS), one 19 Jun at Cone M *Louisa* (JF), one 23 Jun at Willow Sl *Mills* (JLF), one 27 Jun near High L *Emmet* (LAS), and 2 on 29 Jun, 19 Jul at Otter Creek M *Tama* (TGS).

**Great Blue Heron:** For the first time in several years, no large post-breeding concentrations were reported.

**Great Egret:** The *Clinton* spoil island

colony had 530 ads and 506 nests 26 Jun (SJD).

**Snowy Egret:** All: one 10 Jun along hwy 2 near Shenandoah airport *Fremont* (JN).

**Cattle Egret:** All: 2 on 15 Jun at Wau-bonsie WA *Fremont* (SJD) and one 30 Jul at Dairy Ponds *Woodbury* (GLV).

**Green Heron:** A nest with 3 yg 30 Jul at Spirit L *Dickinson* (ET) was the only report of nesting. Elsewhere up to 3 were found in *Black Hawk*, *Bremer*, *Clay*, *Dallas*, *Jefferson*, *Johnson*, *Polk*, *Story*, and *Tama* (m.ob.). Apparently this reclusive species continues as a low-density, statewide species.

**Black-crowned Night-Heron:** All: one juv 5 Jun at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO), one 13 Jun in northeastern *Linn* (BR), one 22 Jul at Copeland Bend WA *Fremont* (MSIM), and one 27, 31 Jul at Cedar L *Linn* (JF).

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron:** All: one 12 Jun at Sedan Bottoms *Appanoose* (TNJ) and one juv 27 Jul near Brenton Sl *Dallas* (RIA, PHA).

**Osprey:** New nests were found at Colfax *Jasper*, West Des Moines *Polk*, and Cumming *Warren*, raising the number of nest sites to 22. Up to 8 birds were released in July at Swan L *Carroll* and Clear L *Cerro Gordo*. From 2003–2014, a total of 164 young have been produced in 95 successful nests in Iowa (PSc).

**Mississippi Kite:** All: 3 on 4 Jun at Memorial P, Ottumwa *Wapello* (BSc) and one there 6, 23 Jun (TNJ, JLF), 2 on 29, 30 Jun at Ashworth P, Des Moines *Polk* (JB, RIA, PHA), and one 5 Jul at Sweet M *Bremer* (DGE).

**Bald Eagle:** Since last summer, eagle nests have been located in *Madison*, *Osceola*, and *Union*, the last three counties that previously did not have active eagle nests (BEh, SJD). Thus, eagle nests have now been found in all 99 of Iowa's counties, some-

thing that just two decades ago seemed highly unlikely.

**Northern Harrier:** A pair 1 Jun at Wildin Prairie *Kossuth* (MCK) and a pair carrying food 18 Jun near Lost Island L *Palo Alto* (ET) were the only indications of nesting. Singles in *Cerro Gordo*, *Clay*, *Dickinson*, *Grundy*, *Hancock* (3 sites), *Winnebago*, and *Worth*, mostly in June (BVL, LAS, SJD, MP, RGo, MSIM), are suggestive of nesting elsewhere.

**Cooper's Hawk:** Nesting reports were a nest with 4 yg 28 Jun at Spirit L *Dickinson* (ET), a nest with 3 yg 4 Jul at Grammer Grove P *Marshall* (Garry Brandenburg *fide* MP), and a nest in Ankeny *Polk* (DK).

**Red-shouldered Hawk:** All: six on 1 Jun at Wau-bonsie SP *Fremont* (KDy), one 12 Jun and 4 on 1 Jul at Dekalb WA *Decatur* (MSIM), one 19 Jun at Farmington Unit *Lee* (BR), 2 on 21 Jun at Croton Unit *Lee* (CRE), one 3 Jul near Palo *Linn* (BR), and one 12 Jul at Yellow River F *Allamakee* (CRE).

**Broad-winged Hawk:** A nest near the Wallace State Office building in Des Moines kept DNR staffers entertained and produced 2 yg (Iowa DNR). Other reports were 2 on 19 Jun at Farmington Unit *Lee* (BR), 2 on 19 Jun at Lick Creek Unit *Lee* (BR), one 21 Jun at Croton Unit *Lee* (JF), one 26 Jun at Yellow River F *Allamakee* (BSc), and one 3 Jul at Brown's Woods *Polk* (BE).

**Swainson's Hawk:** All: an ad 20 Jun north of Melbourne *Marshall* (MP) was east of its usual range.

**Virginia Rail:** All: one 17 Jun at Union Hills WPA *Cerro Gordo* (MSIM), one 18 Jun at Lakin Sl *Guthrie* (MSIM), 2 on 21 Jun at Virgin L *Palo Alto* (LAS), one 27 Jun at Forney L *Fremont* (MSIM), 2 on 27 Jun at Burr Oak L *Emmet* (LAS), 9 on 29 Jun at Big Wall L *Wright* (SJD), and one or 2 including a juv 17 Jun, 15, 23 Jul at Union Hills WPA *Cerro Gordo* (MSIM, RGo, BVL).

**Sora:** More reports than usual: mostly singles at Harrier M *Boone* (MSIM), Union Hills WPA *Cerro Gordo* (RGo, BVL, MSIM), Mallard M *Cerro Gordo* (PH), Forney L *Freemont* (MSIM), Lakin Sl *Guthrie* (MSIM), Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (MHB), Virgin L *Palo Alto* (MSIM), *Polk* (RLC, DTh), Black Hawk WA *Sac* (MSIM), Kiowa Marsh WA *Sac* (MSIM), Otter Creek M *Tama* (MSIM), Wood Duck M *Winnebago* (MSIM), and Big Wall L *Wright* (MSIM).

**Common Gallinule:** One 7 Jun, 5 Jul on Trumbull L *Clay* (LAS), 6 on 13 Jun at Green Island WA *Jackson* (CRE), 4 on 29 Jun at Big Wall L *Wright* (SJD), 3 on 2 Jul at the UpperMissRefuge *Jackson* and 7 ads and two broods of 14 yg there 22 Jul (LGR, BSc), and 3 ads and 8 yg 9 Jul at Cone M *Louisa* (JF).

**American Coot:** The greatest numbers were in *Clay* with 250 birds 13 Jun, 17 Jul at Trumbull L (LAS, SJD) including 100+ broods on 17 Jul (SJD), and 28 on 13 Jun at Dan Greene Sl including numerous broods (LAS). Singles 8 Jul at Water Works P *Polk* (JB) and 23 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (MHB) were south of its usual summer range.

**Sandhill Crane:** Crane numbers continue to increase in their established range in Iowa with high counts of 10 on 5 Jul at Sweet M *Bremer* (DGE) and 10 on 15 Jul at Union Hills WPA *Cerro Gordo* (RGo). Nesting was confirmed in the Great Lakes region when a pair and 2 colts were seen several times northeast of Lost Island L *Palo Alto* (Mary Barrick *fide* Bryan Hellyer). This seems to be the first recent report of nesting from this wetland-rich area of Iowa.

**Black-necked Stilt:** Four adults including a pair at a nest 6, 11, 12 Jun at Green Island WA *Jackson* (DAS, BCC) provided Iowa's second nesting record. The nest was destroyed by high water 12 Jun (BCC). Other reports were one 4 Jun at Ot-

ter Creek M *Tama* (JF) and one 6 Jul near Cedar Rapids airport *Linn* (JF).

**American Avocet:** All: 2 on 4 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD), 7 on 13 Jul at Cedar L *Linn* (JF, JLF), 8 on 17 Jul at Pool 9 *Allamakee* (Brenda Kelly *fide* SJD), 6 on 21 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF), 4 on 29 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF), and one 30, 31 Jul at Round Pond *Johnson* (JLF, LGR).

**Semipalmated Plover:** Last: one 14 Jun at Cone M *Louisa* (JF). Southbound birds, all singles: 17 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF), 22 Jul in *Boone* (DCH), 26 Jul in Waterloo *Black Hawk* (DGE), and 31 Jul at Union Hills WPA *Cerro Gordo* (PH).

**Piping Plover:** A nest that failed at MidAmerican ponds *Pottawattamie* (Naomi Cavalieri *fide* SJD) and one 26 Jul at Saylorville (JB) were the only reports.

**Killdeer:** Post-breeding counts were 56 on 27 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (MHB) and 504 on 22 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD).

**Spotted Sandpiper:** Most: 46 on 22 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD). Other reports were of one or 2 in *Appanoose*, *Black Hawk*, *Cerro Gordo*, and *Linn* (BSc, DGE, BVL, BR).

**Solitary Sandpiper:** First: 3 on 7 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF) and 2 on 9 Jul at Union Hills WPA *Cerro Gordo* (BVL). Most: 5 on 25 Jul near Brenton Arboretum *Dallas* (JB).

**Greater Yellowlegs:** First: singles 25 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF) and 28 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD). Most: 6 on 22 Jul in *Boone* (DCH).

**Willet:** Flocks of 23 and 31 on 28 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD) were both early and unusually large. Other reports were 4 on 6 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (RLC), one 16 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD), and one 19 Jul at Coralville L *Johnson* (JF).



*Lesser Yellowlegs, Hawkeye WA, Johnson, 23 July 2015. Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.*



*Upland Sandpiper, Hancock, 23 July 2015. Photograph by Paul Hertz, Mason City, IA.*

**Lesser Yellowlegs:** First: 6 on 23 Jun at Copeland Bend WA *Fremont* (JLF) and 7 on 27 Jun at Ingham High WA *Emmet* (LAS). Most: 127 on 22 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD).



**Upland Sandpiper:** Most: 9 on 3 Jul in southeastern *Benton* (BR) and 8 on 16 Jun at Keller-ton BCA *Ringgold* (MSIM). Other than the birds at Kel-

lerton, all reports came from 12 counties in the northern two-thirds of Iowa (m.ob., MSIM).

**Whimbrel:** All: 3 on 11 Jun at Green Island WA *Jackson* (\*DAS) and 2 on 23 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD-ph). Previous summer records were 7 Jun 2000 and 26 Jun 1988.

**Ruddy Turnstone:** All: one 26 Jun at Marsh Farm Wetland *Dallas* (JB) was found on an unusual mid-summer date.

**Stilt Sandpiper:** First: 9 on 14 Jul at

Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD). Most: 42 on 22 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD). Other than 7 on 25 Jul near Brenton Arboretum *Dallas* (JB) and 4 on 31 Jul at Union Hills WPA *Cerro Gordo* (PH), other reports were of one or 2 birds.

**Sanderling:** All: 1-4 on 19, 26 Jul at Saylorville Res (SJD, JB).

**Dunlin:** All: one 9 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF).

**Baird's Sandpiper:** All: one 15 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD), one 22 Jul north of Ogden *Boone* (DCH), one or 2 on 22, 23, 27 Jul at Union Hills WPA *Cerro Gordo* (PH, RGo, BVL), and one 26 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (JB).

**Least Sandpiper:** One 21 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* may have summered (SJD). First southbound: 4 on 6 Jul near Cedar Rapids airport *Linn* (JF) and 9 on 9 Jul at Union Hills WPA *Cerro Gordo* (BVL). Most: 150 on 11 Jul at Forest City *Hancock* (PH)



*Pectoral Sandpiper*, Polk, 20 July 2015. Photograph by Richard S. Wacha, Des Moines, IA.

and 508 on 22 Jul at Saylorville Res Polk (SJD).

**White-rumped Sandpiper:** One 23 Jul at Union Hills WPA *Cerro Gordo* (RGo-details).

**Buff-breasted Sandpiper:** All reports were on the last day of the season; up to 5 on 31 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF, MHB) and 7 at the Blue Grass Sod Farm near Alburnett *Linn* (BSc).

**Pectoral Sandpiper:** The only lingering spring bird was one 9 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF). The first southbound birds were 3 on 9 Jul at Union Hills WPA *Cerro Gordo* (BVL) and 5 on 11 Jul at Forest City *Hancock* (PH). The most was 1710 on 22 Jul at Saylorville Res Polk (SJD).

**Semipalmated Sandpiper:** Most and last northbound birds were 20 on 9 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF). The first southbound birds were 3 on 9 Jul at Union Hills WPA *Cerro Gordo* (BVL) and 3 on 10 Jul at

Saylorville Res Polk (SJD). The most southbound birds were 383 on 22 Jul at Saylorville Res Polk (SJD).

**Western Sandpiper:** All: one ad 22 Jul at Saylorville Res Polk (SJD-details).

**Short-billed Dowitcher:** First: one 7 Jul near Cedar Rapids airport *Linn* (JF). Most: 5 on 9, 10 Jul at Union Hills WPA *Cerro Gordo* (BVL, RGo).

**Wilson's Snipe:** All: one 14, 21 Jun near Elk Creek in southern Clay acted territorial (LAS). Others, all singles, were 15 Jul at Union Hills WPA *Cerro Gordo* (BVL), 17 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF), and 26 Jul at Deweys Pasture WA *Palo Alto* (LAS).

**American Woodcock:** All: singles 9 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF), 25 Jun at Sand Creek WA *Decatur* (MSIM), and 13 Jul at Wood Duck M *Winnebago* (MSIM) were within traditional areas for this secretive species while one 23 Jun at Browns L *Woodbury* (MSIM) and 2 on 30 Jul at Black Bird Bend WA *Monona* (MSIM) were near the western edge of its nesting range.

**Wilson's Phalarope:** Evidence of nesting included a pair 22 Jun at Maynard Reece WPA *Kossuth* (Erich Gilbert and Tom Skilling *fide* SJD), an agitated male on a nearby wetland 22 Jun (Tom Skilling *fide* SJD), and a male and a large chick 2 Jul at Maynard Reece WPA *Kossuth* (SJD). Other reports were one 10 Jul at Union Hills WPA *Cerro Gordo* (RGo), 2 fresh juv 19 Jul at Saylorville Res Polk (SJD), and one juv 21 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF).

**Red-necked Phalarope:** All: singles 22 Jul at Saylorville Res Polk (SJD) and 26 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF).

**Franklin's Gull:** Three 21 Jun at Saylorville Res Polk (SJD) and one 15 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF) were mid-summer wanderers. Most: 600 on 17 Jul at Spirit Lake landfill *Dickinson* (SJD). The 12 on



19 Jul at Lime Creek Nature Center *Cerro Gordo* (BVL) probably were southbound.

**Ring-billed Gull:** The only concentrations reported were 78 on 7 Jun at Trumbull L Clay (LAS) and 47 on 26 Jun at the *Clinton* spoil islands (SJD). Gulls did not nest on Iowa islands in that mid-river group this summer but did nest at Meinking M *Dickinson* (Harms 2015). One 18 Jun at Crystal Hills WA *Hancock* (CJF) and 4 on 12 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (MHB) were typical summer stragglers.

**Least Tern:** Reports of one 15 Jun and 3 on 23 Jun at MidAmerican ponds *Pottawattamie* (SJD, JLF), 6 nests and 10 chicks there (Naomi Cavalieri *fide* SJD), and 2 on 3 Jul at New L *Woodbury* (GLV) were from reliable summer sites for this species. The 9 ads, 7 yg and 2 nests on 16, 24 Jul at Deer Island WA *Harrison* (Jon Christensen *fide* SJD-ph) were at a new sandy site created by recent floods.

**Caspian Tern:** More reports than usual with 8 on 23 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD) and 6 on 13 Jun at Otter Creek M *Tama* (JF) the most. Others were 2 on 20 Jun at Cedar L *Linn* (JF), 5 on 13 Jun at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO), 5 on 30 Jun and 4 on 1 Jul at Spirit L *Dickinson* (GLV, ET), 2 on 1 Jul at Babcock Access *Johnson* (JF), and one 11 Jul at Crystal Hills WA *Hancock* (PH).

**Black Tern:** The best summer in several years with nesting confirmed at three sites. As many as 88 on 19 Jul at Trumbull L Clay with adults feeding young (LAS, SJD), a nest 13 Jun at Dan Greene Sl *Clay* (LAS), and as many as 40 including adults feeding young 2 Jul at Eagle L *Hancock* (SJD) and as many as 31 there on 18 Jun, 11 Jul (RGO, BVL, PH). Late northbound birds included one 12 Jun at Cedar L *Linn* (BSc) and 2 on 14 Jun at Cone M *Louisa* (JF). One 13 Jul at Marsh Farm Wetland *Dallas* presumably was southbound as were 20 there 24 Jul (JB), 15 on 29 Jul at Wilson Island SP *Har-*

*rison* (GLV), and 30 on 29 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (LGR).

**Forster's Tern:** The 2 seen several times from 13 Jun–26 Jul at Trumbull L Clay (LAS) and one 16 Jun at Union Slough NWR *Kossuth* (MCK) were reasonably close to areas where the species has historically nested. One 26 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF) was probably an early migrant. The 35 on 26 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD) was the only large group of migrants.

**Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** As many as 6 were found in 26 counties spread across all regions of Iowa (m.ob, MSIM). This species seems to be doing well in the state.

**Black-billed Cuckoo:** Up to 3 were found in 15 counties concentrated in the northern half of Iowa (m.ob, MSIM). Compared to recent years, this represents an increase in reports of a species that seems to be declining in number.

**Barn Owl:** A really good year for Barn Owls with nine nests and six other reports. Nests were reported in *Decatur* (PSc), *Guthrie* (Kay Neumann *fide* BEh), *Jefferson* (BEh), *Lucas* (2 nests, BEh, Skylar Hobbs), *Ringgold* (JRL), *Taylor* (2 nests, BEh), and *Wayne* (BEh). All except the *Decatur* and one of the *Taylor* nests were known to have young present. In addition, singles were seen or heard in *Black Hawk* and *Marion*, 2 were heard or seen in *Polk*, *Story*, and *Van Buren*, and a road kill was found in *Mills* (BEh, SJD, PSc)

**Chuck-will's-widow:** All: one or 2 on 20, 21, 23 Jun at Ross P *Page* (KVS, JLF).

**Eastern Whip-poor-will:** All: 3 calling all June at Clear Creek WA *Allamakee* (TSS), 5 on 5 Jun at Whitebreast Unit *Lucas* (BSc), 3 on 18 Jun at Mt Ayr WA *Ringgold* (MSIM), 4 on 18 Jun at Sand Creek WA *Decatur* (MSIM), one 24 Jun near Sparks Cemetery *Boone* (LGD), and 2 on 2 Jul at Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* (MP).





*Barred Owl, Iowa City, Johnson, 29 June 2015. Photograph by Jim Scheib, Iowa City, IA.*



*Olive-sided Flycatcher, Saylorville Res, Polk, 26 July 2015. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*

**Chimney Swift:** This summer 3 eggs hatched in a nest built in the restored historic Sherman Swift tower now located at the Bickett-Rate Preserve near Buchanan Cedar (*fide* Linda and Robert Scarth).

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** Most common in the far northeast where up to 6 were found at nine sites in *Allamakee*, *Clayton*, and *Winneschiek* (MSIM). Other than one 4 Jun at *Waukee Warren* (AMJ), all other reports were scattered across the northern third of Iowa including one 9 Jun at *Ochee Yahola Worth* (RGo), one 13 Jun at *Big Woods L Black Hawk* (DGE), 3 on 27 Jun at *Effigy Mounds NM Allamakee* (BSc), 2 ads and 3 yg 1 Jul at *Blood Run A Lyon* (ET), 2 on 2 Jul at the *UpperMissRefuge Jackson* (LGR, BSc), and one 19 Jul at *Trumbull L Clay* (LAS).



**Pileated Woodpecker:** Reports came from 17 counties with as many as 6 found in numerous traditional sites in eastern and especially north-

eastern Iowa as well as along the fringes of its range and along the Des Moines R (m.ob., MSIM). Significant outliers were singles 12 Jun in *Sac* and 24 Jun in *Fremont* (MSIM).

**Peregrine Falcon:** Fourteen of 21 active nests produced 34 yg, totals similar to those in 2014. New nesting pairs added in Iowa this year were at Bellevue, Clinton, Dubuque, Keokuk, and Muscatine, all along the Mississippi R. Nests on natural features in northeastern Iowa were at Agee's Bluff near Lansing, Lansing Power Plant cliff, Leo's Bluff near Harper's Ferry, and others near Dubuque, and McGregor (PSc).

**Olive-sided Flycatcher:** Last: one 13 Jun at *Trumbull L Clay* (LAS). One photographed 26 Jul at *Saylorville Res Polk* (SJD) is the third earliest fall record.

**Acadian Flycatcher:** A few were found in 17 counties largely in the southeastern half of Iowa. Most: 8 on 21 Jun at *Bever P Linn* (BR) and 12 Jul at *Yellow River F Allamakee* (CRE). One 22 Jul at *Bertram*



*Eastern Kingbird, Saylorville Res, Polk, 7 July 2015. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*



*Cliff Swallow, Iowa, 25 June 2015. Photograph by Jim Scheib, Iowa City, IA.*

Reservation Clay (LAS) was the most isolated observation.

**Alder Flycatcher:** Last: singles 9 Jun in Ringgold (JRL), 12 Jun in Algona Kossuth (MCK), and one calling repeatedly 16 Jun at Comet Trail Grundy (MP).

**Willow Flycatcher:** Up to 3 were found in 26 counties spanning all of Iowa (m.ob., MSIM), retaining its status as a widespread but nowhere abundant summer resident.

**Least Flycatcher:** A few were found at nine sites in Allamakee, Clayton, and Winneshiek (MSIM, BSc, PDBS) in northeastern Iowa which appears to be its core breeding area in Iowa. Most: 6 on 22 Jul at Lansing WA Allamakee (MSIM).

**Western Kingbird:** The only report was 2 on 15 Jun in West Des Moines Polk (RIA, PHA). Presumably it is still regular in the Des Moines area and along Iowa's western border.

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher:** For only the second time in the past seven years, there were no reports this summer.

**Loggerhead Shrike:** All: besides 3 on 12 Jun in Cerro Gordo (BVL) and 3 on 2 Jul at Kellerton BCA Ringgold (MSIM), singles were found 6 Jun at Neal Smith NWR Jasper (WWH), 12 Jun near Correctionville Woodbury (GLV), 21 Jun near College Springs Page (KVS), 30 Jun at Sand Creek WA Decatur (MSIM), and 23 Jul north of Bronson Woodbury (MP).

**White-eyed Vireo:** All: singles 3 Jun at Pleasant Creek RA Linn (JF), 6 Jun at Cairo Woods WA Louisa (MHB), 4, 21 Jun at Chichaqua WA Polk (DK, BE), 21 Jun at Croton Unit Lee (CRE), 30 Jun at Fox Hills WA Wapello (MSIM), 2 Jul at Sedan Bottoms WA Appanoose (MSIM), 3 Jul at Donnellson Unit Lee (MP), and 26 Jul at Coralville Dam Johnson (MHB).



*Sedge Wren, Harrier M, Boone, 19 June 2015. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*

**Bell's Vireo:** A few were found in 23 counties, mostly in southern Iowa (m.ob., MSIM). Only reports from *Plymouth* (MP), *Worth* (MSIM), and *Wright* (DCH) were from the northern third of the state. Most: 5 on 4 Jun at Honey Creek SP *Appanoose* (BSc).

**Yellow-throated Vireo:** Underreported with a few found in 12 counties scattered across the state.

**Red-eyed Vireo:** Few reports of this widespread woodland species.

**Black-billed Magpie:** For the third straight season, none were reported. Is Iowa's lone population melting away?

**Purple Martin:** Few reports with five colonies with 40+ birds 2 Jul near Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* the most (MP).

**Bank Swallow:** Most: 85 on 31 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (MHB).

**Sedge Wren:** Reports came from 22 counties mostly in the northern two-thirds of Iowa but including reports from as far south as *Fremont*, *Ringgold*, and *Mills*

(m.ob., MSIM). Most: 30 on 19 Jun at Harrier M *Boone* (MSIM) and 17 on 30 Jun at Kirchner Prairie *Clay* (MSIM).

**Marsh Wren:** Reports came from 23 counties, mostly in a band from *Guthrie* and *Jasper* north to the Minnesota border (m.ob., MSIM). One 13 Jun at St. Marys Island WA *Mills* (MSIM) was the southernmost. Very abundant at some wetlands such as 35 on 2 Jul at Big Wall L *Wright* (MSIM) and 27 on 19 Jun at Little Storm L *Buena Vista* (MSIM).

**Carolina Wren:** From 1–3 were in *Appanoose* (TNJ), *Decatur* (MSIM), *Fremont* (MSIM), *Jefferson* (BR), *Linn* (BR), *Marshall* (MP), *Polk* (DTh), *Ringgold* (MSIM), and *Van Buren* (MP).

Other than the reports from *Linn*, *Marshall* and *Polk*, all were from near Iowa's southern border.

**Bewick's Wren:** All: one 12 Jul at Croton Unit *Lee* (SJD).

**Veery:** All: 2 on 9 Jun at French Creek WA *Allamakee* (TSS), one 25 Jun at Pine Creek WA *Allamakee* (TSS), and one seen and 2 others heard 26 Jun at Backbone SP *Delaware* (BSc).

**Wood Thrush:** Up to 7 were found in 24 counties covering all but the northwestern corner of Iowa. Four 13 Jul at Kindlespire P *Clay* (LAS) was the only report from north and west of *Webster*.

**Northern Mockingbird:** The 6 on 21 Jun on a BBS route near College Springs *Page* (KVS) were the most. Elsewhere, 1–3 were in *Adair* (DTh), *Appanoose* (TNJ, BSc), *Davis* (MP), *Johnson* (MHB), *Louisa* (MHB, JLF), *Page* (JLF), *Ringgold* (MSIM), and *Union* (JRL).

**Ovenbird:** Few reports of this fairly common woodland bird. Counts of 9 on 19 Jun at Farmington Unit *Lee* (BR) and 8 on 9 Jun at Boone Woods *Ringgold* (JLR) attest to its abundance in good habitat.



*Prothonotary Warbler, Hawkeye WA, Johnson, 17 June 2015. Photograph by Doug Harr, Ogden, IA.*



*Kentucky Warbler, Croton Unit, Shimek SE, Lee, 12 July 2015. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*

**Worm-eating Warbler:** All reports were from the southeastern corner of Iowa: 2 on 19 Jun at Farmington Unit *Lee* (BR), and singles 21 Jun and 12 Jul at Croton Unit *Lee* (CRE, SJD).

**Louisiana Waterthrush:** All: one 1 Jun at Dows Preserve *Linn* (JF), one 9, 26 Jun at Green Hollow WA *Fremont* (MSIM), one 21 Jun at Bever P *Linn* (BR), 2 on 21 Jun at Croton Unit *Lee* (CRE), 2 on 23 Jun on the Middle Raccoon R *Dallas* (MSIM), and one 3, 4 Jul at Browns Woods *Polk* (BE, RLC).

**Blue-winged Warbler:** Most reports were from the far northeast with as many as 5 found in six sites in *Winneshieek*, five in *Allamakee*, and two in *Clayton* (MSIM, BSc). The only other reports were one heard 2 Jun at Ochee Yahola P *Worth* (BVL) and 2 found 30 Jun at Fox Hills WA *Wapello* (MSIM).

**Prothonotary Warbler:** Most: 4 on 13 Jun at Effigy Mounds NM *Allamakee* (BSc, WWH). Other reports were singles 2 Jun

at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF), 4, 29 Jun at Pine Island SP *Hardin* (MP), 13 Jun at the UpperMissRefuge *Jackson* (CRE), 13 Jun at Chichaqua Greenbelt *Polk* (DTh), and 13, 23 Jun at Big Woods L *Black Hawk* (DGE).

**Tennessee Warbler:** Last: one 10 Jun at Algona Kossuth (MCK) and one heard 28 Jun near Rock Valley *Sioux* (JDJ).

**Connecticut Warbler:** One 2 Jun at Stimes Woods *Worth* (RGo, BVL) was late.

**Kentucky Warbler:** Most: 7 on 30 Jun at Fox Hills WA *Wapello* (MSIM) and 4 on 21 Jun at Croton Unit *Lee* (CRE). One or 2 were at Coralville L *Johnson* (JF), Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF), Rathbun L *Appanoose* (BSc), Cairo Woods *Louisa* (MHB), Donnellson Unit *Lee* (CRE, MP), Backbone SP *Delaware* (BSc), Blackhawk Point WA *Allamakee* (MSIM), and French Creek WA *Allamakee* (MSIM), mostly in June. One 22 Jul at Bertram Reservation *Clay* (LAS) was the furthest west and latest report.



**Hooded Warbler:** All: one 6 Jun and 2 on 18 Jun at Blackhawk Point WA *Allamakee* (MSIM), and singles 3 Jun at Cardinal M *Winneshiek* (MSIM), 7 Jun at Lansing WA *Allamakee* (MSIM), and 21 Jun and 12 Jul at Donnellson Unit *Lee* (CRE, SJD).

**American Redstart:** This abundant nesting warbler was reported from throughout the state. The 25 on 13 Jun at Yellow River F *Allamakee* (WWH) and 14 on 29 Jun at Pine Lake SP *Hardin* (MP) give an indication of how abundant it can be in good habitat.

**Cerulean Warbler:** The Effigy Mounds/Yellow River Forest BCA has been recognized as a Globally Important Area for this species. Accordingly, reports of 10 or more came from that area as well as an ad on nest 13 Jun at Yellow River F *Allamakee* (BSc, WWH, BR, PDBS). Other than 3 or 4 on 7, 19 Jun at Lansing WA *Allamakee* (MSIM), all reports were singles at Dows Preserve *Linn* (JF), Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF), Cairo Woods *Louisa* (MHB), Pilot Knob SP *Hancock* (RGo, BVL), Sny Magill WA *Clayton* (MSIM), Waterloo Creek WA *Allamakee* (MSIM), and Cardinal M *Winneshiek* (MSIM).

**Northern Parula:** Most: 5 on 3 Jul at Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* (MP). Other reports were of one or 2 on 6 Jun at Cairo Woods *Louisa* (MHB), 19, 21 Jun at Croton, Lick Creek, and Donnellson units *Lee* (BR, CRE), 22 Jun at Mt Ayr WA *Ringgold* (MSIM), 26 Jun at Green Hollow WA *Freemont* (MSIM), and 30 Jun at Fox Hills WA *Wapello* (MSIM).

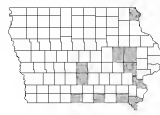
**Blackpoll Warbler:** One 8 Jun at Lansing WA *Allamakee* (MSIM, TSS-details) is Iowa's third latest record.

**Pine Warbler:** All: singles in Donnellson and Farmington units *Lee*, both 12 Jul (SJD).

**Yellow-throated Warbler:** Other than

2 on 9 Jul at Coon Creek WA *Winneshiek* (MSIM), all reports were singles: Ashworth P *Polk* (JB), Cedar Rapids *Linn* (BR), Yellow River F *Allamakee* (BSc, WWH, CRE, PDBS), Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* (MP), Donnellson, Croton, and Farmington units *Lee* (MP, BR), and Fox Hills WA *Wapello* (MSIM).

**Yellow-breasted Chat:** More reports than usual with birds found in 11 counties, mostly singles and mostly in the southeastern quarter of Iowa. The most were 3 on 6 Jun at Cairo Woods *Louisa* (MHB), 3 on 21 Jun at Croton Unit *Lee* (CRE), and 3 on 21 Jul at Waterloo Creek WA *Allamakee* (MSIM). Besides the latter sighting, the other outlier was one 27 Jul at Blackhawk Point WA *Allamakee* (MSIM).



of Iowa. The most were 3 on 6 Jun at Cairo Woods *Louisa* (MHB), 3 on 21 Jun at Croton Unit *Lee* (CRE), and 3 on 21 Jul at Waterloo Creek WA *Allamakee* (MSIM). Besides the latter sighting, the other outlier was one 27 Jul at Blackhawk Point WA *Allamakee* (MSIM).

**Spotted Towhee:** Two males seen and photographed 6 Jun at Oak Grove P *Sioux* (JDJ), constitute Iowa's second summer record (see longer note). On 20 and 28 Jun one of those birds was seen feeding a young Brown-headed Cowbird (JDJ). This is evidence that at least one Spotted Towhee nested in Iowa, a first, but it is unclear whether the female showed characteristics of Spotted or Eastern towhee. Previous summer reports are one 28 Jun 2000 in *Lyon* (IBL 70:179) and an apparent hybrid Spotted x Eastern towhee 11 Jun 2002 in *Pottawattamie* (IBL 72:218).

**Eastern Towhee:** There were few reports of this low-density but widespread species. The most was 12 on 13 Jun at Yellow River F *Allamakee* (WWH).

**Clay-colored Sparrow:** Other than one 2, 6 Jun at Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* (KVS) and a second bird there 19 Jun (KVS), all were in northern Iowa: 2 on 2 Jun at Stimes Woods *Worth* (RGo), one or 2 on 2–27 Jun at Hanlontown Sl *Worth* (BVL,



*Lark Sparrow, Hawkeye WA, Johnson, 13 June 2015. Photograph by Jim Scheib, Iowa City, IA.*



*Savannah Sparrow, Sioux, 24 July 2015. Photograph by Joe Jungers, Hospers, IA.*

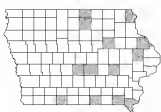
RGo, DGE), 2 on 12 Jun at Panicum Prairie Worth (RGo), up to 4 on 12 Jun at Christian Taylor Worth (RGo, BVL), up to 3 on 30 Jun, 1 Jul at Union Hills WPA Cerro Gordo (RGo, CJF, MSIM), 2 on 20 Jul at Virgin L WA Palo Alto (MSIM), and 6 on 22 Jul at Diamond Lake WPA Dickinson (MSIM).

**Lark Sparrow:** The only reports of this sometimes overlooked, low-density species were from *Cerro Gordo, Floyd, Lee, Louisa, O'Brien, and Polk* (m.ob.). A pair 27 Jun at Waterman Creek A O'Brien was attending a nest (JDJ).

**Savannah Sparrow:** The 3 on 20 Jun at Big Sand Mound Preserve *Louisa* (MHB) were fairly far south for this species.

**Grasshopper Sparrow:** Up to 10 were found in 15 counties fairly evenly distributed across Iowa (m.ob.).

**Henslow's Sparrow:** Henslow's Sparrows were found in 13 counties mainly in the eastern half of Iowa. The most were at least 60 on Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* 1 Jun (KVS) and 8 on 2 Jul near Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* (MP). Signifi-



cant populations seem to be present at the Kellerton BCA and near L Sugema *Van Buren* (BEh, Bill Ohde *vide* BEh).

**Lincoln's Sparrow:** One 11 Jun at Pleasant Creek RA *Linn* (BCC-ph) is Iowa's first summer record.

**Swamp Sparrow:** Reported from numerous wetlands in 15 counties, mostly in the northern half of Iowa and especially in the Prairie Pothole region. The southernmost were one 18 Jun at *Lakin Sl Guthrie* and 2 on 23 Jun at *Springbrook WA Guthrie* (MSIM). The most were 16 on 24 Jun at *Ocheyedan WA Clay* and 17 on 2 Jul at *Big Wall L Wright* (MSIM).

**White-throated Sparrow:** One was heard well 22 Jun at *Big Woods L Black Hawk* (DGE). A fairly frequent straggler, this is the fifth summer in the last ten that one has been found in Iowa.

**Summer Tanager:** Besides reports of one or 2 in *Appanoose, Davis, Lee, Van Buren* and *Wapello* (BSc, MSIM, CRE, MP) where this species is regular, reports of a juv at Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* (DTh), singles in *Cedar, Polk, and Webster* (BR, RIA, PHA,





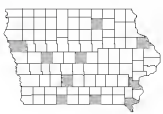
*Lincoln's Sparrow*, Pleasant Creek RA, Linn, 11 June 2015. Photograph by Brandon Caswell, Marion, IA.



*Swamp Sparrow*, Harrier M, Boone, 14 Jun 2015. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.

SJD, DCH) and a pair 8, 10 Jun in Marshall (MP) and a pair at a nest 6 Jul in Dubuque (DAS) add to the growing number of reports across the middle third of Iowa. One 9 Jul at Coon Creek WA Winneshiek (MSIM) was north of its usual range.

**Scarlet Tanager:** Birds were found in 20 counties, mostly from the southeastern half of the state (m.ob.). The most were 7 on 18 Jun at Blackhawk Point WA Allamakee (MSIM) and 7, 19 Jun at Lansing WA Allamakee (MSIM).



**Blue Grosbeak:** The range of this species continues to change. Only the 2 on 21 Jun and one 3 Jul in Lee (CRE, MP), one 17 Jul on Sauk Rail Trail Carroll (DCH), and singles 23 Jul and 9 on 31 Jul in Woodbury (MP, GLV) were in places where one expected to see this species a few years ago. Singles 3 Jun in Appanoose (TNJ) and 9 Jul near Cone M Louisa (JLF) continue modest expansions from the species' once limited range in southeastern Iowa and one 18 Jul at Deere Dike Dubuque

(DAS) moves them further north. One 19 Jun near Bob Pyle M Story (SJD), one 12–16 Jul south of Nora Springs Floyd (CJF, RGo, BVL, PH), one 3, 16 Jun at Kellerton BCA Ringgold (MSIM), and 2 on 22 Jul in north-eastern Madison (RIA, PHA) continue the species' move into central Iowa and north almost to the Minnesota border.

**PAINTED BUNTING:** A male was photographed at a feeder 7 Jun in Williams Wright (\*Gayle Bothe-ph).

**Dickcissel:** Few reports. No one suggested any variation from its usual status as an abundant summer resident.

**Bobolink:** The 16 on 5 Jun at Sedan Bottoms WA Appanoose (BSc) and one 2 Jul near Lacey-Keosauqua SP Van Buren (MP) were near Iowa's southern border. Other reports came from 12 counties, all in the northern two-thirds of the state (m.ob.).

**Eastern Meadowlark:** Birds at the western fringe of their range were 2 on 30 Jul at Bacon Creek P Woodbury (GLV) and one 27 Jun at Anderson Prairie Emmet (LAS).

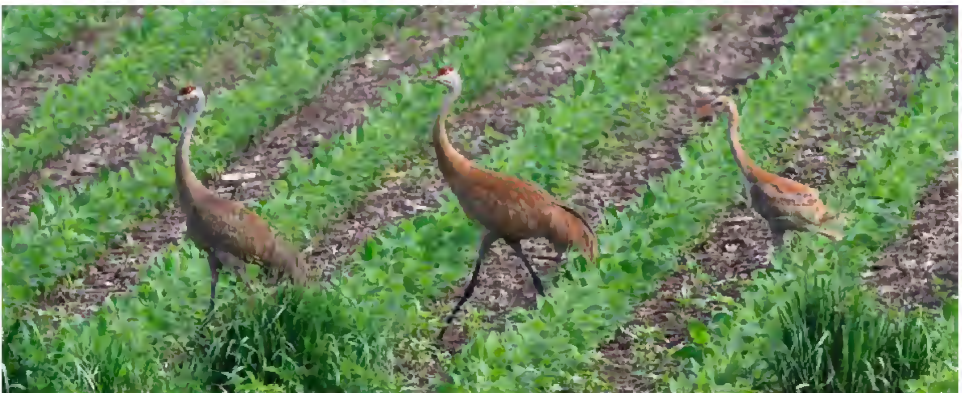


*Virginia Rail, Spring Run WA, Dickinson, 27 June 2015. Photograph by Joe Jungers, Hospers, IA.*



*Common Gallinule, Green Island WA, Jackson, 22 July 2015. Photograph by Linda Rudolph, Coralville, IA.*

*Least Tern, Deer Island WA, Harrison, 24 July 2015. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*



*Sandhill Crane brood, Chichaqua WA, Polk, 18 June 2015. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*



*Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Louisa, 9 July 2015.  
Photograph by Jim Scheib, Iowa City, IA.*



*American Kestrel, Boone, 16 June 2015.  
Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



*Indigo Bunting, Hawkeye WA, Johnson, 3  
June 2015. Photograph by Jim Scheib, Iowa  
City, IA.*



*Marsh Wren, Harrier M, Boone, 19 July  
2015. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*





*Blue Grosbeak, Oak Grove P, Sioux, 28 June 2015. Photograph by Joe Jungers, Hospers, IA*



*Dickcissel, Harrier M, Boone, 19 July 2015. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*

**Western Meadowlark:** One 20 Jun at Big Sand Mound Preserve *Louisa* (MHB) was about as far east as the species can go in Iowa.

**Yellow-headed Blackbird:** Called easy to find in *Cerro Gordo*, *Hancock*, and *Worth* (PH), as expected, most reports were within the Prairie Pothole region of Iowa. Outside of that region were reports from Brown's L *Woodbury*, Nottleman Island WA *Mills*, St. Marys Island WA *Mills*, and Forney L *Fre-mont* (MSIM).

**Great-tailed Grackle:** Reports from four scattered counties: one 4 Jun at Owego Wetlands *Woodbury* (GLV), 5 ads and 5 yg 14 Jun at Dan Greene Sl *Clay* (LAS), one 15

Jun at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (SJD), and 2 on 16 Jun at Kellerton BCA *Ringgold* (MSIM).

**Brown-headed Cowbird:** A young cowbird was observed being fed by a Spotted Towhee on 20, 28 Jun at Oak Grove P *Sioux* (JDJ), the first such record for Iowa.

**Orchard Oriole:** Up to 5 were found in 10 counties (*Floyd*, *Grundy*, *Jackson*, *Lee*, *Plymouth*, *Polk*, *Tama*, *Van Buren*, *Win-neshiek*, and *Woodbury*, m.ob.), typical of its statewide but low-density distribution.

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow:** One 2, 27 Jun, 2 Jul at Otter Creek M *Tama* (MP, DGE) continues this species' northwestern range expansion.

## COMMENT

More than 60 observers contributed to this report including 48 who made reports on the IOU website, MSIM workers, and others who sent in individual reports. I received more than 1700 reports, 919 on the IOU website, 640 from MSIM workers, and about 170 from various individuals. Again, I thank all of you for taking time to make your reports available to me. Without your contributions, this report would not be possible.

A total of 150 species are covered in this report and another 61 species were either reported to the IOU or MSIM databases or are common species that certainly were present in Iowa this summer, making a total of 211 species found during summer this year. This is somewhat fewer than the 223 present last summer. The 150 species included in the report is the fewest in a report in recent years and well below the 164 included 2014. The average for summers 2010-2014 is 161 species. Relatively

few late spring migrants were reported this year; and a number of species that usually are found somewhere in Iowa during summer were not reported this year. These included Ruffed Grouse, White-faced Ibis/ibis species, Herring Gull, White-winged Dove, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Black-billed Magpie, Red-breasted Nuthatch, and Pine Siskin.

## CONTRIBUTORS

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Resources/Multiple Species Inventory			Walt Wagner-Hecht	WWH	Cedar Rapids
and Monitoring (MSIM)			Hank Zaletel	HZ	Nevada

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# Additions to Iowa state bird list, 1997 to 2015

James J. Dinsmore and Stephen J. Dinsmore

In their book, Kent and Dinsmore (1996) list 398 species known to have occurred in Iowa. The most recent list of Iowa's birds (Johnson 2011) lists 424 species and since then an additional three species have been added to the Iowa list (Table 1), raising the total to 427 species at the end of 2015. This paper lists the basic details of the first record for each of those 29 species and provides a brief synopsis of its occurrence in Iowa, thereby providing an abbreviated and updated supplement to the 1996 book. One of those species, Cackling Goose, was known to occur in Iowa in the late 1800s (Anderson 1907) but until 2004 was considered a subspecies within the Canada Goose species complex. Once the species was recognized by the American Ornithologists' Union in 2004, it was added to the Iowa list.

## **Fulvous Whistling-Duck**

First record: 17 Jul–8 Sep 1994, Goose Lake, Clinton County. Dinsmore (2013).

Comment: The identification of this 1994 sighting was accepted but the origin of the bird was considered uncertain and the species was not added to the Iowa list at that time. In the next 16 years, populations of this southern species showed increasing evidence of a pattern of vagrancy with records from all states adjacent to Iowa. In 2010, this old record was re-reviewed and accepted (Johnson 2010). A second record was added when six Fulvous Whistling-Ducks were seen at Forney Lake in Fremont County in June 2012.

## **Cackling Goose**

In 2004, the Canada Goose species complex was split in two with birds in the four smallest bodied subspecies being recognized as a separate species, Cackling Goose (see Hertz et al. 2006). These four subspecies nest in northern Alaska and Canada. One of these four, *Branta ca-*

*nadensis richarsonius* (often called Hutchin's Goose) has long been known as a migrant in Iowa where it commonly mingles with flocks of Canada Geese. With its recognition as a separate species, Cackling Goose was added to the Iowa list in 2004.

## **Mottled Duck**

First record: 7–11 Jul 2006. Saylorville Reservoir, Polk County. Dinsmore and Brees (2007).

Comment: Normally found along the Gulf Coast from Texas eastward and including much of Florida, in recent years this species has shown a tendency to wander north with several records from states near Iowa. Most likely the Iowa bird came from Texas or Louisiana. At least two Mottled Ducks were found at Saylorville Reservoir again in summer and fall 2009 and one was found in spring 2014 and 2015 in Greene County.

## **Yellow-billed Loon**

First record: 18 Apr 1999. Clear Lake, Cerro Gordo County. Kent (2001).



Table 1. Sequential arrival dates of 29 species first found in Iowa since the publication of Kent and Dinsmore (1996).

Year of first record	Species
1994	Fulvous Whistling-Duck (accepted in 2010)
1997	White-winged Dove
	Eurasian Collared-Dove
1998	Sprague's Pipit
1999	Yellow-billed Loon
	Lesser Goldfinch
	Arctic Tern
2001	Painted Bunting
2002	Crested Caracara
2003	Hooded Oriole
	Pacific Wren (accepted in 2011)
	Cackling Goose
2004	Baird's Sparrow
	Boreal Owl
2005	Royal Tern
	Acorn Woodpecker
	Green Violetear
2006	Brambling
	Mottled Duck
	Red-breasted Sapsucker
2007	Cave Swallow
	Black-tailed Gull
	Fork-tailed Flycatcher
2008	Scott's Oriole
2009	Violet-green Swallow
2010	Anna's Hummingbird
2011	Broad-billed Hummingbird
2013	Glaucous-winged Gull
2015	Brown Booby

Comment: This arctic nesting species typically winters along the Pacific coast of North America. With several reports from Minnesota and repeated wintering reports from southern Missouri, its appearance in Iowa was expected. Since the original report, there have been several additional records from Iowa.

### **Brown Booby**

First record: 3 Sep 2015. Red Rock Reservoir, Marion County. Dinsmore (2016).

This species is typically found in tropical and subtropical marine environments. It is regular along the coasts of South Florida and southern California with occasional records on the Texas Coast and the Atlantic Coast. Inland records are rare but one was found in 2015 in Nebraska.

### **Black-tailed Gull**

First record: 17 Nov–6 Dec 2007. Saylorville Reservoir, Polk County. Dinsmore (2008).

Comment: Native to eastern Asia, in the past 25 years this species has been found increasingly often in North America, especially in Alaska but also south along the Pacific Coast to California and rarely along the Atlantic Coast and at several inland locations. The Iowa bird was seen by hundreds of birders and perhaps attracted more out-of-state birders to Iowa than any other rare bird previously.

### **Glaucous-winged Gull**

First record: 7 Dec 2013. Davenport, Scott County. Stone (2014).

Comment: This bird was found among a mixed species flock of gulls along the Mississippi River in Davenport. The bird was studied closely but its identity was not confirmed until later study of a photograph. This Pacific Coast species has been found

at several Midwestern states and has been long-expected to be found in Iowa.

### **Arctic Tern**

First record: 18 Aug 1999. Saylorville Reservoir, Polk County. Dinsmore and Dinsmore (1999).

Comment: This Holarctic species nests in Alaska, northern Canada, and along the Atlantic coast, and moves south to Antarctic waters where it winters. A few individuals pass through midcontinental North America with several reports from the Duluth, Minnesota area. Thus the species was expected to rarely occur in Iowa. A second individual was found at Saylorville on 19 August 1999 and additional records are singles at Coralville Reservoir in fall 2010 and at Saylorville in fall 2012.

### **Royal Tern**

First record: 20 Aug–14 Sep 2005. Rathbun Reservoir, Appanoose County. Dinsmore and Gilliam (2006).

Comment: Iowa's only record is of a single bird that remained for several weeks and allowed many birders to see it. Royal Terns typically are found along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts but occasionally occur inland, especially after strong storms that could blow them away from the coast.

### **Eurasian Collared-Dove**

First record: 30 Aug–Nov 1997, Grinnell, Poweshiek County. Fuller (1999).

Comment: This Old World species apparently reached the United States when birds released on the Bahamas reached Florida in the late 1970s or early 1980s. From there, their range expanded rapidly and its arrival in Iowa was expected. It spread rapidly through Iowa (Cecil 2004) and by 2010 it had been reported from all 99 counties. The first report of nesting was

in Kossuth County in 2001 (Cecil 2004) and it probably has nested in most of Iowa's counties.

### **White-winged Dove**

First record: 8–15 Apr 1997. Ottumwa, Wapello County. Kent (1997).

Comment: Native to southwestern United States and Mexico, this species' range has been expanding northward for a number of years and its appearance in Iowa was expected. Since its arrival in Iowa, it has been reported from a number of counties but until recently, most reports seemed to be transients. In 2010, it was found nesting in Shenandoah (Dyche 2010).

### **Boreal Owl**

First record: 12 Nov 2004. George Wyth State Park, Black Hawk County. Garrett (2005).

Comment: One of several owls of the boreal forests of northern Minnesota and southern Canada, this species is less likely to move south than the Great Gray Owl or Northern Hawk Owl. The first Iowa record was a bird that originally was thought to be a Northern Saw-whet Owl but was identified from a photo of the bird. Only the photographer saw the bird. A dead Boreal Owl was found in late winter or early spring 2013 near Rock Valley in Sioux County and has been saved as a study skin (Hertzel and De Haan 2015).

### **Green Violetear**

First record: 27 Sep–4 Oct 2005. Near Grundy Center, Grundy County. Neher and Neher (2006).

Comment: Native to montane regions from Bolivia north to central Mexico, this colorful hummingbird has developed a reputation as a vagrant with numerous records from North America. Most are from Texas

but strays have ranged north to the Great Lakes and New England. Iowa's second record occurred in September 2006 when one appeared in Sioux City. Presumably the Iowa birds derive from a partially migratory subspecies found from northwestern Nicaragua to Mexico.

### **Anna's Hummingbird**

First record: 31 Oct–25 Nov 2010. Saylor Twp., Polk County. Brees (2011).

Comment: This western hummingbird is found along the West Coast from southern California to northern Mexico. It has been reported from numerous eastern states and was on several "expected in Iowa" lists. The 2010 bird persisted at a feeder for several weeks where the tolerant property owner allowed many birders the opportunity to see it. Another was found in fall 2015, again in Polk County.

### **Broad-billed Hummingbird**

First record: 24–25 Jun 2011. Charles City, Floyd County. Montgomery and Hertzel (2011).

Comment: This western hummingbird made a brief appearance at a feeder but only five viewers were able to see it. Several photographs documented the record. The species is normally found in Mexico north into southern Arizona and has been found in several Midwestern states including Kansas, Illinois, and Wisconsin.

### **Acorn Woodpecker**

First record: 1 or 2 Sep 2005. Ames, Story County. Johnson and Zeltinger (2006).

Comment: One of the most surprising new arrivals in Iowa, this bird was seen by only one observer who did not recognize it but fortunately took a recognizable photograph of the bird. Native to the far

West and Southwest, this species has not shown any tendency to wander from its usual range.

### **Red-breasted Sapsucker**

First record: 6 Dec 2006. Near Council Bluffs, Pottawattamie County. Peters and Johnson (2007).

Comment: Native to the Pacific coast from southeastern Alaska to central California, this species has shown little evidence of vagrancy and hence its appearance in Iowa was surprising. The only record was one that was seen by three observers and photographed by an observer who was familiar with the species. The bird appeared to be of the northern subspecies which occurs from Oregon north into Alaska.

### **Crested Caracara**

First record: 28 Sep 2002. Near Storm Lake, Buena Vista County. Lampe (2003).

Comment: Native to Florida, Texas, and the Desert Southwest, this species occasionally wanders north. This individual was seen and photographed by a single observer and remains Iowa's only record.

### **Fork-tailed Flycatcher**

First record: 20–23 Nov 2007. Near Clutier, Tama County. Gregory and Johnson (2008).

Comment: This Central and South American species is well known for wandering far north from its usual range and had been expected to occur in Iowa for a number of years. The Iowa bird was from the southernmost subspecies found in South America which is known for its strong "reverse migration". It stayed for several days and was seen by numerous birders. Amazingly, in April 2009 a Fork-tailed Flycatcher was found near Dysart in Tama County, only about 12 miles from the bird found the

previous fall, leading some to wonder if the same individual had returned.

### **Violet-green Swallow**

First record: 14 May 2009. Hawarden, Sioux County. Reinking and Hollinga (2009).

Comment: This western North American species is found east to western Nebraska and South Dakota and had long been looked for in Iowa. The timing and location of this, Iowa's only record, fit expectations. It was found by two experienced birders visiting the state, the only individuals who saw the bird.

### **Cave Swallow**

First record: 26 Oct 2007. Saylorville Reservoir, Polk County. Dinsmore (2008).

Comment: In recent decades, this species which nests in southern Florida and Texas south into Mexico has been found to undergo a northward fall movement which takes some individuals north to the Midwest including Nebraska, Wisconsin, and Missouri. Iowa's only record was one seen by a single observer.

### **Pacific Wren**

First record: 21 Oct 2003. Brookside Park, Ames, Story County. S. Patterson (2013).

Comment: The split of Winter Wren in 2010 into three species raised this former western North American subspecies to species rank. Both the appearance and the calls of this bird were extensively documented. In particular, the calls were a crucial element in accepting the record for Iowa.

### **Sprague's Pipit**

First record: 22 Apr 1998, Union Hills Wildlife Area, Cerro Gordo County. Kent (1999), Johnson (2003).

Comment: Native to prairies west of Iowa, reports of the species date back to 1895 (Anderson 1907) but lacking a specimen or photograph, none of the numerous reports were accepted until 1998. Since then there have been a number of additional records for Iowa. Often difficult to approach and see well during migration, it probably is a regular but rare migrant in western Iowa.

### **Painted Bunting**

First record: 12 May 2001. Arney Bend Wildlife Area, Marshall County. Proescholdt (2002).

Comment: This southern species nests as far north as southern Missouri and Illinois but occasionally wanders further north. After the brief appearance of the individual in 2002, singles were seen repeatedly in Ames in 2006, 2007, and 2008 and in Madison County in 2014.

### **Baird's Sparrow**

First record: 4 Jun 2004. Near Cherokee, Cherokee County. K. Patterson (2013).

Comment: This species of the northern Great Plains regularly migrates through states just west of Iowa so its occurrence here was not especially surprising. Its secretive habits during migration make it difficult to find and identify and easy to overlook. Iowa's only record was a single individual seen by one observer.

### **Hooded Oriole**

First record: 25 May 2003. Fairbank, Buchanan County. Johnson (2013).

Comment: This species of southern Texas and the desert Southwest has shown a pattern of vagrancy that has taken it to

several Midwestern states. Iowa's first record is one that appeared briefly and was photographed. A second bird, again photographed, was found near Ames in 2015.

### **Scott's Oriole**

First record: 7–14 Apr 2008. Estherville, Emmet County. Balch and Johnson (2008).

Comment: This bird of the desert Southwest has wandered to several Midwestern states and thus was somewhat expected to occur in Iowa. Iowa's only record was a bird that stayed for about a week and was seen by numerous birders.

### **Brambling**

First record: 1–21 Jan 2006. Near Cedar Rapids, Linn County. Scheible (2006).

Comment: This Eurasian species has been found in Alaska numerous times and has a well-established record of wandering further east and south in North America including several states adjacent to Iowa. Thus its arrival in Iowa was a bit overdue. Iowa's first record was a bird that was seen three times at a bird feeder over a three-week period and photographed. In 2014, one was found in Clay County.

### **Lesser Goldfinch**

First record: 5 Aug 1999. Rockford, Floyd County. Kent (2002).

Comment: This southwestern species has shown a tendency to wander north and east of its usual range including records from Missouri and Wisconsin so its appearance in Iowa was not too surprising. Iowa's only record was one bird that made a brief appearance at a feeder and was seen and photographed by two individuals.



## DISCUSSION

For 14 of the 29 species, the record listed here is the only accepted record of the species occurring in Iowa. For another seven species (Fulvous Whistling-Duck, Boreal Owl, Green Violetear, Anna's Hummingbird, Fork-tailed Flycatcher, Hooded Oriole, Brambling) there are only two accepted records. Only two of the 29 species are statewide in distribution. Cackling Geese have been a migrant through Iowa since at least the late 1800s but until 2004 it was considered a subspecies of Canada Goose. Eurasian Collared-Doves have exhibited a spectacular population growth in Iowa since their arrival in 1997 (Cecil 2004) and have been reported in all 99 counties and probably now nest in most or all of them. The only other species of the 29 that has been known to nest in Iowa is White-winged Dove, which has nested in Shenandoah. These three are the only ones that are considered Regular in Iowa. Two others, Sprague's Pipit and Painted Bunting, are classified as Casual and the other 24 are all Accidental in Iowa.

The first state record for each of the 28 species (excluding Cackling Goose) come from 21 counties with the five from Polk County the most from any county. Two new state records were found in Cerro Gordo, Floyd, and Story counties and one each were found in 17 other counties. One site, Saylorville Reservoir, had four first state records, by far the most of any site. Of the nine sections of Iowa (see inside front cover of Kent and Dinsmore 1996), at least one new state species was first found in all except the west-central section of Iowa. By far the most were the 11 species that were found in central Iowa, and four each were found northwestern and north-central Iowa.

Considering the season in which each of the 28 species (excluding Cackling Goose) was first reported, fall (14) and spring (7) had the most, and summer (4) and winter (3) had the fewest. The fall season has more months (four) than the other seasons, but even so, it is clear that fall, with almost half of the first reports, is the season during which new species have been most likely to occur. Besides the extra month in that season, the fact that bird populations are probably greatest at that time of year, fall migration is underway, and birding activity is heavy during the fall all probably contribute to the numerous first records during fall. The most new species were found in April, August, and September (four in each) and none were discovered in February or March.

## FUTURE ADDITIONS TO IOWA'S AVIFAUNA

The idea of predicting the next species to occur in Iowa has long interested many birders. Both Dinsmore et al. (1984) and Kent and Dinsmore (1996) had lists of species that were likely to eventually occur in Iowa. Twenty of the 29 new state species covered in this paper were among the 86 species in the various lists in Kent and Dinsmore (1996). Of the other nine species, the sighting of a Fulvous Whistling-Duck in 1994 had been accepted by the Records Committee but was considered of Uncertain Origin and had not been added to the Iowa list of bird species. Another species, Cackling Goose, was still considered a subspecies of Canada Goose. The remaining seven species, Brown Booby, Black-tailed Gull, Acorn Woodpecker, Red-breasted Sapsucker, Crested Caracara, Pacific Wren, and Hooded Oriole, were not among the 86 species listed in Kent and Dinsmore (1996) and were unexpected in Iowa. With the great ability that birds have to disperse, it is likely that additional, unexpected "long-shots" will arrive here in the future.

At the I.O.U. meeting in September 2005 we presented a talk on possible future arrivals in Iowa. Four of the ten on our primary list (Glaucous-winged Gull, Anna's Hummingbird, Green Violetear, and Cave Swallow) and two of eight species on a secondary list have since then been found in Iowa. Perhaps the species that provided the most discussion at the time of our talk was Green Violetear with many who heard our talk leaving the room muttering "What the heck is a Green Violetear?" or words to that effect. Amazingly, three days later a Green Violetear appeared at the Neher's hummingbird feeder near Grundy Center and many of Iowa's birders got to see one in person. With such success as prognosticators, our status as legends was secured. High on our list of possible future additions are Tufted Duck, White-tailed Kite, Purple Sandpiper, Band-tailed Pigeon, Inca Dove, Calliope Hummingbird, Ash-throated Flycatcher, and McCown's Longspur.

We acknowledge the contributions of Tom Kent, who has been interested in this topic for many years. He was largely responsible for the lists of possible additions to the state list in the 1984 and 1996 books.

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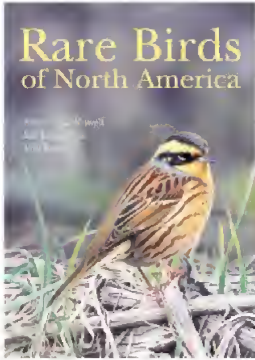
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# Book Review

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*Rare Birds of North America* by Steve N. G. Howell, Ian Lewington, and Will Russell. 2014. 428 pp., 275 color plates, Princeton, New Jersey, ISBN 978-0-691-11796-6, \$35.00 (hard cover).

Birding is one of the most popular outdoor recreational activities, and as the number of people involved in this activity increase so has the number of encounters with rare species in North America. It is a birder's delight to encounter a species originally from another continent or explore some of the birding hot spots, such as the Aleutian Islands, that may regularly welcome a variety of birds rarely seen here. For example, in

January 2015, the first Common Scoter (*Melanitta nigra*), a species normally found in Europe and Asia, was recorded in North America. For those birders keen on seeing such birds, Howell et al. offer a unique guide covering rare birds recorded since as far back as 1950 and introduce the reader to possible theories explaining these occurrences.

Howell et al. define a "rare" species as one that has very few (~5) individuals recorded since 1950. Many of these individuals can be described as vagrants, a somewhat ambiguous term. Several processes may lead to vagrancy, but, in general, it refers to individuals recorded in areas where they should not normally occur. Those species more prone to vagrancy often migrate annually (e.g., ducks) or are known to disperse in search of more plentiful resources (e.g., Rufous-backed Thrush, *Turdus rufopalliatu*s).

Migration is a curious phenomenon, and while birds are specialists at this feat, they are not always perfect. Two popular explanations for this event include drift, where birds are coasted towards an unintended destination along their migration in spring or fall, and misorientation, where individuals appear to migrate in the "wrong" direction. For example, birds, such as the Oriental Greenfinch (*Chloris sinica*) and Eurasian Bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*), that migrate north through East Asia in spring may drift east towards the Aleutian Islands. Other theories for vagrancy include birds overshooting their initial destination, species dispersing to find better resources, social species associating with another species during migration, and disorientation.

It seems that meticulous and scrutinizing research was involved in choosing the species and records to include in this guide, and those chosen are represented by Ian Lewington's excellent artwork. North American distributions were determined mostly based on records by the American Birding Association Checklist and the journal of North American birds. Species are divided up into 11 main groups, including waterfowl, pelagic seabirds, gulls and terns, and songbirds. They are ordered similarly to other guides, with landbirds following waterbirds, so anyone familiar with using other guides will likely be able to flip

to a particular group in this book relatively easily. About 262 species are featured in the species accounts, with various locations represented, including both Old World and New World species. Likely the most important aspects of the species accounts are the descriptions of the species distributions in both North America and their place of origin. Words such as “exceptional” or “rare” are used to summarize the overall distribution of the species in question. Their regular breeding and wintering grounds provide some context to the reader, and, unless noted otherwise, many of these species are considered to be common within their normal range. Their distributions in North America are summarized in each species account and are regionally organized (northeast, east, etc.).

The species accounts are fairly user friendly, with a consistent and intuitive organization, but they do lack something on which birders rely when flipping through guides: range maps. Having a relatively simple map to indicate a species’ normal distribution might allow for a more efficient way to know from where this species comes. On the other hand, this is a book focused on records of birds found in North America that are not commonly seen in this region, so having a map of their normal range may not be as useful. Indeed, compromising any maps for larger, more detailed images of the birds may be more useful to anyone trying to identify a rare species. As such, this guide book is likely not the kind of book a birder will be carrying in his or her field bag. The text describing the distribution of each species is fairly brief and easy to comprehend, but it takes some time to read through the author comments, which provides more detail on records and possible reasons for the species’ vagrancy.

Overall, this is a unique and resourceful guide, but it likely caters to the avid birder in North America, rather than the backyard or occasional birder. Nevertheless, with the growing popularity of birding and the extent to which people will go to see a rare bird, this guide can be a useful tool for some birders. If nothing else it is an interesting and informative read, especially with the author’s introduction to vagrancy and why birds may be considered rare.

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**UPCOMING MEETINGS OF THE IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION:** Spring: 13–15 May 2016, Ames.

**FRONT COVER PHOTO:** Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks, Wapsi River Environmental Center, Scott, 18 June 2015. Photograph by Brandon Caswell, Marion, IA

**BACK COVER PHOTO:** Eastern Meadowlark, Harrier M, Boone, 14 June 2015. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.

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